

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF THE UNITED STATES FOR THE
MIDDLE DISTRICT OF ALABAMA, NORTHERN DIVISION

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA)	
)	CRIMINAL ACTION NO.
v.)	2:17cr3-MHT
)	(WO)
MICHAEL LEE MORRIS)	

OPINION AND ORDER

This cause is before the court on the question whether defendant Michael Lee Morris has the mental capacity to stand trial, that is, whether he is currently suffering from a mental disease or defect rendering him mentally incompetent to the extent that he is not able to understand the nature and consequences of the proceedings against him or to assist properly in his defense. See 18 U.S.C. § 4241(a).

Dr. Catherine Boyer, Ph.D., conducted an evaluation of Morris's competence to stand trial, at the request of the defense. Dr. Boyer concluded that, while he has been diagnosed with schizophrenia, Morris has been on

medications for his illness and currently has the ability to understand the nature and consequences of proceedings against him and to assist adequately his legal counsel in his defense. She noted that he has "no deficits in his factual or rational understanding of legal proceedings," and that he was able to state accurately the charges against him. Forensic Evaluation (doc. no. 48) at 3-4. During the evaluation, he was able to define adequately the roles of the prosecutor, the judge, and the jury. Id. As for his ability to assist his attorneys, Morris "demonstrated understanding of his legal alternatives ... and the ability to consider those alternatives and their possible consequences in order to make a decision with guidance from his attorney." Id. Neither the defense nor the government objects to the conclusion that Morris is competent to proceed.

Therefore, based on Dr. Boyer's evaluation, as well as the representations made by the parties during an on-the-record hearing on August 1, 2017, the court

holds that Morris is not suffering from a mental disease or defect rendering him mentally incompetent to the extent that he is not able to understand the nature and consequences of the proceedings against him or to assist properly in his defense.

Accordingly, it is ORDERED that defendant Michael Lee Morris is declared mentally competent to stand trial in this case.

DONE, this the 1st day of August, 2017.

/s/ Myron H. Thompson
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE